



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
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FOR RELEASE: July 24th, 2007

CONTACT: Lisie Kitchel, DNR, Bureau of Endangered Resources
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SUBJECT: Proposed Incidental Take Authorization for the Beloit Avenue Bike Trail Relocation in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.

Editor's Note: Wisconsin's endangered species law (s. 29.604, Wis. Stats.) requires the Department of Natural Resources to notify the public when it proposes to authorize the incidental taking of a state endangered or threatened species.

MADISON, Wis. The Department of Natural Resources proposes to authorize the "incidental taking" of the state threatened Butler's Gartersnake resulting from the relocation of the Beloit Avenue Bike Trail near Greenfield in Milwaukee County.

The County of Milwaukee plans to relocate the existing Beloit Avenue Bike Trail which runs along Beloit Avenue in Milwaukee County. The new trail involves extending a ten foot wide asphalt bike path from the existing bike path on the west side to a newly constructed trail underpass under Beloit Road that was constructed when the bridge over the Root River was replaced in 2004. The total new length of the trail is approximately 600 feet. The proposed Beloit Avenue Bike Trail relocation project was initially approved by the DNR in 2002 along with the Beloit Avenue bridge replacement and road expansion project. However, the bike trail relocation work did not occur when the road project occurred and is now proposed for construction in 2007. The trail relocation occurs within a Tier 3 habitat site along the Root River that is occupied by Butler's gartersnake.

To minimize the take of the snake, a snake removal was required in the area where the new trail will be relocated. Snake removal work was completed in June of 2007. Snake fencing has been installed to prevent snakes from re-entering the construction area on both the north and south sides of Beloit Avenue. These fences will be maintained during the snake's active period until the bike trail and revegetation of the area has been completed.

Through the Incidental Take Consultation process, the Department has determined that the proposed project will minimize the impacts to the snake by having removed snakes from the project area and keeping snakes out of the area by adequately maintaining the snake exclusion fencing. The Department has determined that this project will not likely jeopardize the continued existence and recovery of the state population of these snakes or the whole plant-animal community of which they are a part; and has benefit to the public health, safety or welfare that justifies the action.

Copies of the jeopardy assessment are available on the DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/take/overview.htm> or upon request from Lisie Kitchel, Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Endangered Resources, 101 South Webster, Madison, WI 53707, (608) 266-5248. Public comments will be taken through August 7th, 2007 and should be sent to the address above.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Lisie Kitchel, DNR, Bureau of Endangered Resources, 608/266-5248 or P.O. Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707-7921.